

RED DOG FARM



In your share this week:

Carrots
Turnips
Savoy Cabbage
French Fingerling Potatoes
Celeriac

After three weeks in Mexico, it's wonderful to be home again! I did have a good time in the sunny south. I traveled around the Yucatan Peninsula and Chiapas. Highlights were visiting Mayan ruins, snorkeling with turtles, and experiencing the colorful San Cristobal. This was no luxury affair; I lived on a tight budget, taking 13 hour night bus rides on winding mountain roads, sleeping in sometimes less than desirable hostel rooms, and dealing with the unique sanitary issues of Mexico. It was an adventure! By the time I came home, I was so happy to return to the farm and hang out with Rupert and friends. The best part of being away was in the coming home.

I am also excited to be home to get started on this year's farm season! There is already so much to do and I already feel behind (this is a constant in a farmer's life)! Big winter projects include putting up a steel frame greenhouse and building a farm stand. Then there's the routine winter equipment maintenance, field planning, coordinating, seed and supplies ordering, perennial weeding, barn cleaning, and more. It is wonderful to have energy and enthusiasm for all these projects- another benefit of taking a break!

I was so pleased to return to the farm humming along normally under the thoughtful care of Emily and Cha. Besides a few renegade cows, there were no mishaps to speak of. It was such a treat to read Emily's newsletters from Mexico each week. I was so impressed with her light, humorous writing style. I hope you enjoyed her voice in the newsletter as well. Look for more newsletters from Emily in the future.

One of the highlights this week has been watching the winter bird activity. A fat-bellied hawk is a constant guard on the farm, keeping a keen eye out for rodents. I love watching him in flight or resting atop a fence post. Another familiar is the great blue heron. Normally I spot her hanging out near the creek, but lately she seems to be enjoying the marsh area in the corner by the driveway and Center Rd. Her regal stance and suspicious look make me respect her space.

When I left for vacation, everything was still frozen solid, and it is a relief to see the field moist and not rigid anymore. But, it's also hard to take in the aftermath of the freeze. Harvest has been taking considerably longer since we often have to sort through rot in the crops. Whether from the high water table at the tips of their roots or freeze damage near their crowns, the roots left in the field are not as easy to harvest as before. You will notice your carrots and turnips this week have been trimmed to eliminate any damage. If you get substandard turnips or carrots, please let me know and I would be happy to replace them. Although we tried our hardest to eliminate any poor quality, sometimes it was very difficult to tell. If you don't like the more carrotty flavor of the carrots, try cooking them. They are just as sweet as ever!

Another disappointment was realizing the extent of the dings on the stored potatoes. The dings are from the potato digger (a mechanized piece of equipment) not being adjusted properly. Unfortunately I didn't realize my mistake until the potatoes were all dug. The dings have healed really well and don't seem to be causing rot. Simply cut out the dinged spots and use as normal.

The Savoy cabbage has small amounts of frost damage on its leaf edges, but nothing too major.

The celeriac is gorgeous in its white creaminess. Celeriac is all stored in the cooler and keeps well all winter long. This week we have some new celeriac recipes sent in by a CSA member.

I hope you have all had a good holiday and New Year's celebrations. Please feel free to contact me about any observations or suggestions you have about how the CSA has been going over the past three weeks.

RECIPES

Celery Root Gratin

Sent in by Jill Silver, adapted slightly

1 lb. French Fingerling Potatoes
1 Celeriac root
Salt to taste
1-3 Tbs. olive oil
1 medium onion
2 celery stalks
1 tsp. pepper
1 cup dry white wine or stock
15-ounce can tomatoes, juice reserved
Thinly shaved parmesan

Put on a pot of water to boil. Peel the celeriac root. Slice the potatoes and celeriac into 1/4" slices. Dunk in boiling water for five minutes. Meanwhile, sauté the onion, celery stalks and pepper in olive oil until tender. Salt to taste. Add in the wine or stock and tomatoes. Cook until liquid is reduced by half. In a greased 8"x10" oven proof dish, pour half the tomato- onion mixture, then the potatoes and celeriac, topped with the remaining tomato- onion mixture. Cover and bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes. Remove from heat and garnish with thin slices of parmesan or other hard cheese. Serve with a salad.

Chicken Stir-fry

2 chicken breasts, cubed
1 Savoy Cabbage, thinly sliced
1-2 Carrots, sliced diagonally
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp fresh minced ginger
2 Tbs. toasted sesame oil
3 Tbs. sesame seeds
Soy sauce to taste

In a wok or a large skillet, sauté the onion until tender. Add the carrots, minced garlic, ginger and chicken breast. Sauté until chicken is cooked through. Add in the cabbage. Sauté until cabbage is just tender but not overcooked. Garnish with sesame seeds and season with soy sauce. Serve over a bed of rice or noodles.

Braised Turnips with Poppy Seed Bread Crumbs

Gourmet, February 2008

For turnips

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 pounds medium turnips (not Japanese), peeled and cut into 1-inch-thick wedges
- 1 1/2 cups water

- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

For bread crumbs

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup fine fresh bread crumbs from a baguette
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley

Braise turnips:

Melt butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium heat, then add turnips, water, lemon juice, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, 30 minutes. Increase heat to medium and stir turnips, then briskly simmer, uncovered, until all of liquid has evaporated and turnips are glazed and just tender, 20 to 35 minutes (they should be cooked through but still retain their shape).

Make bread crumbs while turnips cook:

Heat oil in a large heavy skillet over medium heat until it shimmers, then cook garlic, stirring, until pale golden, about 1 minute. Add bread crumbs and poppy seeds and cook, stirring frequently, until golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in parsley and salt to taste. Just before serving, sprinkle bread crumbs over turnips.

www.reddogfarm.net



karyn@reddogfarm.net



(360)732-0223